

MINUTES of the meeting of the **COMMUNITIES, ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHWAYS SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 1.00 pm on 1 July 2019 at Ashcombe Suite, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Thursday, 19 September 2019.

Elected Members:
(*present as expected)

- * Mr Saj Hussain (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mr John O'Reilly (Chairman)
- * Mr Andy MacLeod (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mrs Fiona White
- * Mr Mike Bennison
- * Mr Paul Deach
- * Mr Jonathan Essex
- * Mr John Furey
- * Mr Ken Gulati
- * Mrs Jan Mason
- * Mrs Becky Rush
- * Mr Keith Witham

In attendance

Denise Turner Stewart, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Fire & Resilience

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Jan Mason and Mike Goodman, Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 2]

There were none.

3 QUESTIONS & PETITIONS [Item 3]

No questions or petitions had been received.

4 UPDATE FROM THE WASTE TASK GROUP [Item 4]

Declarations of interest:

None

Witnesses:

Dr Andrew Povey, Chairman of the waste task group

Alan Bowley, Interim Head of Environment

Jason Russell, Executive Director for Highways, Transport and Environment

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chairman started by explaining that the Executive Director for Highways, Transport and Environment was leaving the council and

thanked him for all his hard work, wishing him all the best for the future.

2. The item was introduced by the Chairman of the Waste task group whom explained that in January 2019 the Cabinet had paused on the closure of four Community Recycling Centres (CRC's). The waste task group would be reporting back to Cabinet with its findings in September. A key priority of the task group was to try and find savings in the current operation of the CRC's and investigate ways of increasing recycling rates. A number of site visits had been undertaken at various CRC's across Surrey and the group supported the use of re-use shops at these sites. Therefore it was important that the CRC's were kept and developed as a place for recycling and helping the environment.
3. Two Members of the Waste task group whom were also Members of the Committee stated that the closure of CRC's was deeply unpopular and reusing goods needed to be promoted alongside recycling.
4. The Chairman queried if the waste task group had had any ideas of how income could be generated at CRC's. The Chairman of the waste task group explained that re-use shops had been extended which would not only generate income but take goods out of the waste stream. A bike scheme had also been set-up to refurbish and resell bikes which could also be extended. It was further added that the county needed to work better with the voluntary sector to promote re-use. Importantly further work needed to be done with residents to promote the re-use, recycle and reduce agenda.
5. A Member of the Committee queried if there were plans to extend re-use shops to other CRC locations and if it was possible to identify individuals not recycling properly and engage with them more proactively about the benefits of recycling. The Interim Head of Environment explained that Suez collected all re-use items from CRC's and delivered them to the four re-use shops. Discussions were taking place on whether these shops could be stand alone and if co-location was actually necessary. Through the use of performance data, the Surrey Environment Partnership would be targeting efforts to promote recycling in areas where recycling rates were low.
6. A Member of the Committee stated that they were relieved to hear that the Task Group were in support of retaining the four CRC's and queried if it was possible to differentiate between commercial and household rubbish. The Interim Head of Environment explained that van permits were being introduced for commercial activity but there would also be a grey area in terms of unscrupulous users but work was being done with Suez to identify these people. It was added that charging for waste was set by government and the council was legally entitled to charge for the disposal of some waste. The Chairman of the task group stated that the group had not reviewed charging and would look into the details of this.
7. Concerns were raised around the implications of charging for waste and specifically issues around fly-tipping and individuals burning wood. It was therefore important to review these decisions in line with other council policies.
8. A Member of the Committee asked for officers to clarify closing times for CRC's especially Randall's Lane. The Chairman of the task group stated that in order to encourage re-use and recycling, information about the CRC's needed to be clarified and information was already available on the public website.

9. The Interim Head of Environment stated that Surrey CRC's did not track people visiting sites although permit schemes were being introduced to control cross border waste disposal. It was explained that Suez was responsible for handling Surreys waste through a PFI contract.
10. Members of the Committee were in support of more work being undertaken with social groups around the re-use of goods.
11. Another Member of the Committee argued that the current contract in place with district and boroughs was not working. The Interim Head of Environment explained that there were four district and boroughs within the current contractual arrangements but with the governments drive towards more consistency with collections these arrangements could possibly change with more authorities joining the arrangements.
12. The Chairman recommended that the task group should review charging at CRC's. The Chairman of the task group stated that although the group had not taken a view on this, all evidence to increase recycling points to one direction with regards to charging.

Resolved:

The Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee,

- I. welcome and endorse the waste task groups indication for keeping all CRC's in Surrey open,
- II. encourage extensive publicity and communication around recycling to residents by both officers and members,
- III. scrutinise the final waste task group report before submission to Cabinet,
- IV. recommend that the waste task group consider charging for waste disposal at CRC's as part of their work programme.

5 RETHINKING TRANSPORT PROGRAMME [Item 5]

Declarations of interest:

None

Witnesses:

Simon Griffin, Partnership Lead, Strategic Commissioning
Colin Kemp, Deputy Leader

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The report was introduced by the Deputy Leader and Partnership Lead whom explained that the rethinking transport project had been set up to fundamentally reimagine transport in Surrey and will contribute to achieving the ambitions of Surrey's 2030 Vision and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Paul Deach left the meeting at 2pm

2. The Chairman started with questioning and asked how committed the Deputy Leader was to the fundamental reimagining of transport in Surrey. The Deputy Leader stated that he was committed to rethinking transport and that there would be some quick wins and longer term goals. The Deputy Leader was committed to a high level challenge and was optimistic about what could be achieved. The Chairman

queried what these quick wins were. The Deputy Leader stated that he did not want to pre-empt anything and was waiting for IMPOWER to produce their discovery phase report. The Partnership Lead explained that work was still ongoing with partners and a collective decision on short term wins would be concluded in due course.

3. A Member of the Committee queried if the consultation would be looking at google map data to identify the journeys people were actually undertaking or would be based solely on qualitative data. He further asked if this project would lead to further cuts to bus services in Surrey and would deal with both climate change and air pollution concerns in Surrey. The Deputy Leader assured members that this project was not about cuts to services but more about how we deliver better and more efficient services. The Partnership Lead explained that the service was listening to the views of partners and residents before making any decisions regarding services. It was added that a discovery phase report would be produced within the next few weeks.
4. Concern was raised around investment required for this project. It was queried if any other councils had undertaken similar projects and who the key partners in this project were. The Deputy Leader recognised that the council was experiencing financial challenges but better use of capital would improve the revenue position. No other councils had undertaken a project on this level. The Partnership Lead explained that there were councils that were doing similar work and looking at specific aspects of the travel system including Leeds, Tees Valley and Hackney. Discussions had also taken place with the business community, Bob Pickles, the two LEPS in Surrey, education settings, district and boroughs, Youth Cabinet and health colleagues.
5. A Member of the Committee suggested that rural and urban settings are considered separately as part of this work especially as a number of GP surgeries had been moved out of villages to more urban areas. The Deputy Leader assured the Committee that rural communities would be taken seriously as part of this work.
6. The Chairman stated that this was a project worth pursuing as long as the commitment was there to see this through for the next two years. The Chairman asked the Committee if there was any interest from the Committee in reviewing the pilot projects as they progressed and helping form policy initiatives associated with the project. Some Members of the Committee were of the view that a task and finish group should not be formed on this project until the discovery phase report was ready.
7. A Committee Member suggested that regular briefing notes on the progress of the project were shared with the Committee. The Deputy Leader agreed to this.

Resolved:

The Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee,

- I. support the Rethinking Transport project and will receive an update on the conclusion of the discovery phase in due course,
- II. agree for the Committee to receive briefings from the Deputy Leader on the progress of the Rethinking Transport project going forward.

6 SURREY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE TRANSFORMATION WORKING GROUP PROGRESS REPORT [Item 6]

Declarations of interest:

None

Witnesses:

Saj Hussain, Chairman of the Fire Transformation Working Group

Tina Mountain, Working Group Member

Denise Turner Stewart, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Fire & Resilience

Steve Owen Hughes, Director of Community Protection & Emergencies

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The progress report was introduced by the Chairman of the Fire Transformation Working Group whom explained the work that had been undertaken to date. The Chairman thanked members of the group and explained that various stakeholders had been met to discuss the community safety plan. The Working Group Member explained that the Working Group had met with the Chief Fire Officer at Hampshire Fire and Rescue and was impressed by the Fire and Rescue Authority's way of working with firefighters.
2. The Chairman asked if Working Group Members felt that safety would be compromised with the changes to night time cover. The Chairman of the Fire Transformation Working Group stated that one of the main issues was concerns around the shortage of staff within the service. The Chairman was supportive of the dynamic cover tool used by the service. The Working Group Member stated that a concern the Group had was around the availability of on-call firefighters.
3. A Member of the Committee queried if the number of firefighters would reduce with the new proposals. The Director of Community Protection & Emergencies explained that there had been a combination of historic shortages within the service over the years however recruitment was being undertaken to increase firefighter numbers. Importantly recruitment was being undertaken to the levels needed to maintain full capacity and the IRMP had modelled the correct level of fire service required which includes requirements at day and night time.
4. It was argued that the spread of information regarding the consultation needed to be shared more effectively with district and boroughs.
5. A Member of the Committee commented that the evidence from the plan shows that it would take longer to respond to a night time call after the proposals are introduced. The Director of Community Protection & Emergencies stated that the message going to the public is that there would not be a change to response times. It was explained that getting to fires faster did not always save lives and hence the importance of prevention firstly and foremost. Referring back to the Equality Impact Assessment attached to the Plan, the Member reiterated that under the proposals on average a first appliance will arrive at an incident later. The Member felt it was important for the service to be upfront with the public about this.
6. Some Members were of the view that the service should be focusing on the improvements that would be gained by the proposals rather than potential savings. The Director of Community Protection & Emergencies was clear that this was not about cuts but delivering a

more efficient and effective service. The Cabinet Member added that changing the current model allows the service to meet emerging dangers such as water deaths and put forward an optimum model.

7. A Member of the Committee stated that he had spoken to local people at local meetings and had no negative comments regarding the proposals. The important message is to stop fires happening in the first place.
8. The Chairman specified that it was the role of the Working Group to arrive at their own conclusions and present recommendations to the Committee in September ahead of the item being considered by Cabinet. The basis of the discussion in September would be around the Working Group's recommendations.

Resolved:

The Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee acknowledges the progress of the Fire Transformation Working Group in undertaking its review and agrees for the Working Group to return to the Select Committee in September with final recommendations.

7 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 7]

Declarations of interest:

None

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Following a request from the Leader, the Chairman asked the Committee if they were minded to establish a task and finish group named clean, green and safe communities to look at environmental matters. A Member of the Committee was of the view that this group should be renamed to reflect what the group was planning to do primarily climate change. Nine Members of the Committee were in support of this task group being set up and one Member of the Committee abstained from voting on this. The Member that abstained from the vote asked for the notes from the induction meeting which took place earlier in the morning to be shared with the Committee which would explain why the Member was abstaining.
2. In regards to the forward work programme, a Member asked if there could be a discussion on the 20mph policy, the sale of the Surrey Fire and Rescue HQ in Reigate and the potential of using electric fire engines going forward. Another Member of the Committee explained that the 20mph policy took effect from the speed policy and the policy as a whole would need to be reviewed.
3. It was argued by some Members that the following should be considered by the Committee going forward; the councils asset policy, pollution outside schools, airport expansions and the impacts on Surrey. The Chairman stated that both pollution outside schools and airport expansion could be included within the terms of reference of the clean, green and safe communities task and finish group.
4. The progress of the countryside strategy was queried.
5. Members were supportive of the asset and place strategy being included on the Committees forward work programme.

Resolved:

For a clean, green and safe communities task and finish group to be set up.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 8]

The next meeting of the Select Committee will be held on 19 September 2019 in the Ashcombe Suite, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames.

Meeting ended at: 15:17

Chairman